

Message Text

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AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
CINCUSNAVERU LONDON
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN GE
USODCOSOUTH NAPLES
USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST IZMIR
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 6093

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, PINT, TU
SUBJ: TURKISH MILITARY REASSIGNMENTS

REF: ANKARA 5811

1. TURKISH PRESS AUGUST 21 REPORTED, WITHOUT EDITORIAL COMMENT, OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF SENIOR TURKISH MILITARY COMMAND CHANGES. DEPUTY CHIEF, TURKISH GENERAL STAFF (TGS), WILL BECOME COMMANDER OF THE JANDARMA WHILE THE NEWLY PROMOTED ARMY GENERAL HAYDAR SALTIK BECOMES DEPUTY TGS; THE NEW CHIEF OF THE TURKISH AIR FORCE IS GENERAL SAHINKAYA WHO REPLACES GENERAL AYAN WHO
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"VOLUNTARILY" RESIGNED. SAHINKAYA IN TURN WILL BE REPLACED AS DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL BY ADMIRAL ARIF AKDOGANLAR. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT OTHER COMMAND CHANGES WILL BE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED.

2. COMMENT:

A. SALTİK AS DEPUTY TGS AND CELASUN AT THE JANDARMA ARE EXCELLENT ASSIGNMENTS. NEITHER OFFICER HAS READILY IDENTIFIABLE POLITICAL LEANINGS. SALTİK, WHO IS PRESENTLY COMMANDER OF TURKISH ARMED FORCES ON CYPRUS, HAS PREVIOUSLY SERVED IN TGS AS J-3 (OPERATIONS). HE IS DESCRIBED AS AN EXTREMELY AGGRESSIVE OFFICER WHO IS EXPECTED TO CENTRALIZE TGS INFORMATION FLOW AND DECISION MAKING IN HIS OWN HANDS. HE IS COMPLETELY FLUENT IN ENGLISH, WELL DISPOSED TOWARD CONTINUED TIES WITH THE US, BUT CAN BE EXPECTED TO ADVOCATE TOUGH POSITIONS IN FUTURE US-TURKISH SECURITY COOPERATION NEGOTIATIONS.

B. CELASUN, AS COMMANDER OF THE JANDARMA, WILL RESTORE COMMAND OF THAT PARA-MILITARY INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE TO THE PRESTIGE OF A FOUR STAR BILLET. HE IS AN ABLE AND RESPONSIBLE OFFICER WHO WILL OVERSEE THE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE USE OF THE JANDARMA TO ASSIST LOCAL POLICE IN COMBATING TERRORISM IN URBAN AREAS.

C. SAYINKAYA WILL BRING TO CHIEF TAF HIS EXTENSIVE EXPOSURE TO INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ISSUES AS NCS DIRECTOR. HIS SUCCESSOR AT THE TURKISH NSC, ADMIRAL ARIF AKDOGANLAR, IS KNOWN TO BE PRO-US AND PRO-NATO. THE DAO WILL BE SUBMITTING ADDITIONAL BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION.

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D. AS WITH THE AUGUST 1 PROMOTION LIST, THE SENIOR ASSIGNMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN RECEIVED PUBLICLY AS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED. RECENT INTELLIGENCE REPORTS, HOWEVER, INDICATE THAT ECEVIT ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL SESSIONS THAT PRODUCED THIS YEAR'S PROMOTION LIST. PRIME MINISTERS HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN THE MILITARY PROMOTION AND ASSIGNMENT PROCESS. WE DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT ECEVIT COULD PURSUE THESE INTERESTS BLATANTLY WITHOUT SUCH POLITICAL INTERFERENCE BECOMING WIDELY KNOWN AND RESENTED. THE ABSENCE OF ANY PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE AUGUST PROMOTION/ REASSIGNMENT CYCLE SUGGESTS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER PURSUED HIS OBJECTIVES MORE DEFTLY THAN HIS PREDECESSOR HAD LAST YEAR (REFTEL).
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